

Democrats Pursuing an All-of-the-Above Approach to American Energy, Taking Steps to Protect American Consumers

Democrats are committed to an “all-of-the-above” energy policy that increases drilling safely and responsibly and invests in alternative energy technologies, such as those that harness energy from wind, solar, and biofuel sources. Meanwhile, Republicans are protecting tax breaks for Big Oil and attempting to dismantle protections against speculation in the oil markets. Their one-dimensional, “drill-only” approach to rising gas prices will not help American families.

There is no easy fix to rising gas prices, but Democrats are committed to solutions that will protect consumers at the pump and enhance energy security and independence.

Democrats are expanding domestic production of oil and gas and increasing energy independence by reducing imports:

- Since President Obama took office, U.S. oil and natural gas production has increased each year, while imports of foreign oil have decreased to less than half of the oil the U.S. consumes.
- In 2011, U.S. crude oil production reached its highest level in 8 years, increasing by an estimated 110,000 barrels per day over 2010 levels to 5.59 million barrels per day.
- U.S. natural gas production grew in 2011 and eclipsed the previous all-time production record set in 1973.
- The U.S. has a record number of oil and gas rigs operating today – more than the rest of the world combined. Currently the U.S. has 1,981 rigs in operation, more than quadrupling exploration efforts for oil and natural gas in the past three years.
- Under the Obama Administration, 75,000 jobs have been created in the oil and gas sector between 2009 and 2011 (Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Democrats are encouraging development onshore and offshore:

- The Obama Administration has announced the 2012-2017 Offshore Oil and Gas Development Program, which will open more than 75 percent of our potential offshore oil and gas resources.
- The Administration has scheduled a 38 million acre lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico in 2012, which could produce up to 1 billion barrels of oil and 4 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.
- In 2011, the Department of the Interior’s (DOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) held 32 oil and gas lease sales, covering nearly 4.4 million acres and generating \$256 million in revenue for American taxpayers, and in 2012, BLM is scheduled to hold an additional 32 lease sales.
- The Administration has implemented onshore leasing reforms, increasing certainty for industry by reducing conflict, litigation, and protests.
- In 2010, DOI offered 37 million offshore acres in the Gulf of Mexico for oil and gas exploration and production – companies leased just 2.4 million acres.

- While the Administration has been active in leasing land to oil companies for oil and gas development, those companies are slow in developing those lands. In 2011, more than two-thirds of offshore leases in the Gulf of Mexico and more than half of onshore leases on federal lands remain idle, neither producing nor under active exploration and development by the companies who hold those leases (Department of the Interior).

Democrats have established historic fuel economy standards to reduce our dependence upon foreign oil:

- Ambitious vehicle fuel economy standards set last year will cut oil consumption by 12 billion barrels and save American families \$1.7 trillion over the next decade.
- The Obama Administration has also finalized the first-ever national fuel efficiency and greenhouse gas (GHG) emission standards for heavy-duty trucks, vans, and buses, which will reduce oil consumption by over 500 million barrels, and save more than \$50 billion in fuel costs.

Democrats are protecting American consumers:

- The President's FY 2013 Budget eliminates unnecessary subsidies for oil and gas companies making record profits, which will save taxpayers \$4 billion annually.
- As part of Wall Street Reform enacted by Democrats, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) was empowered to address speculation in oil markets that has historically driven up prices. Last December, over Democrats' protests, House Republicans set the CFTC's budget at \$103 million less than what was requested by the Obama Administration – leaving it without the full resources it needs to oversee oil markets.
- Last year, the Administration established the Oil and Gas Fraud Working Group to enforce state and federal law and safeguard against manipulation of oil and gas prices.

Democrats are making record investments in alternative energy technologies that will reduce our dependence on foreign oil and create jobs here in the U.S.:

- The Obama Administration has made record investments in clean energy, including last week's announcement that the Administration will make a \$44 million investment in research to broaden our potential fuel supplies by producing fuel from algae and improve the performance of natural gas vehicles.
- House Democrats' Make It In America plan includes legislation that make investments in clean energy, including: the Clean Energy Technology Manufacturing and Export Assistance Fund, which will help American clean energy technology firms compete and create clean energy jobs; the New Alternative Transportation to Give Americans Solutions (NAT GAS) Act, which provides incentives to encourage the production and purchasing of domestically produced natural gas vehicles and trucks; and the Advanced Vehicle Technology Act, which ensures the next generation of advanced vehicles can be built in America.